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## THE RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS OF THE AGE.

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A GREAT many people have not known what to make of the articles in the NORTH AMERICAN advertising for a new religion, a new standard of truth, and a new morality. It is understood that some weak people ceased to subscribe to the REVIEW because of their supposed irreligious tendency. An editor of an able weekly paper wrote a reply to them, but was induced to withdraw it by a wiseacre who persuaded him that they were a sly defense of religion. Most people were curious to know who could have written them, and wondered what was the aim of the author or authors. A newspaper writer of strong antipathies malignantly ascribed them to a college president, who did not take much pains to deny them till he found himself satirized, and then could not speak of them with temper.

It so happens that I am well acquainted with the writers, who are personal friends of mine own. The oldest used to give occasional lectures in the New England academy in which I was trained. The second was an old pupil of that institution, and often visited it. The third was a fellow-student with me there.

It was the full intention of my father to give me an education of the highest order, and I was about to enter the famous university in our neighborhood when he died. What was I now to do? The farm was a bare, gravelly one, with more rock and stones than soil, requiring much care and yielding little produce. My mother had nothing left her but that farm. I resolved at once to give myself up to her as she gave herself up to me. While my companions went off joyously to the college, I devoted myself to tilling and sowing; and, upon the whole, I do not regret the sacrifice (as I felt it at the time) which I made. I love the old homestead with its fields, its cattle, its horses, and fruit-trees, which I have come to look upon as personal friends. I have

persuaded myself that farming is as favorable to independent thinking as the student life down there in that university, with its technical scholarship, its sophistry, and its haughtiness. I find that, with Robert Burns, I love the daisy and the mouse far more tenderly than these college lads, who handle only dried skeletons. I can follow the plow and yet be musing all the day long. I have long winter evenings with little to do, and I employ them in reading fresh books, lent me by a professor from the college library. The pure air invigorates me, and the aspects of the earth and sky, morning, noon, and evening, of spring and summer, of the fall and the winter, are watched with interest, and are felt through my whole being. I feel as if from my rocky height here I could take a fresher view of life, of the world around me and the world above me, than my former school companions, who are narrowed by the abstractions of learning. Fortunately, I have been able to keep up my friendship with members of the college. They come out one by one or in little groups on the Saturdays, and tell me what they are doing in their intellectual gymnasium, what sort of man the last appointed professor or tutor is, what the latest original work that has appeared, and what the topics discussed in the societies and in the little clubs. I often put on a sort of inquiring Socratic air, and question them as to the worth of what they are learning from these dead or living languages, metaphysical subtleties, and old bones.

When the articles appeared in the NORTH AMERICAN, I recognized the writers at once. I felt as if I saw their fallacies, and was strongly tempted to answer and expose them, the more so as they were after the tune of the times, and were misleading some of these college youths. I longed excessively to bring the authors together, that we might have a symposium, at once of bodily and intellectual food. So I asked them to spend a spring afternoon at our farm. I ventured to propose to my mother that she might ask the Agnostic's lady to come with him. Her whole nervous frame became intensely strung on the instant. She evidently grew an inch or two taller. I was sure I saw sparks issuing from her eyes; she looked precisely like her ancestress who came over in the Mayflower, and she treated the proposal as indignantly as that ancestress would have treated a mistress of Charles II. I abandoned the proposal on the instant. She wondered what sort of thing a symposium was, and was in doubt about it till I told

her it was to be after the model of the conferences in the Book of Job. She was only half satisfied, but told me she hoped I would act the part of the young Elihu, when the older men might be "darkening counsel by words without knowledge."

The three gentlemen arrived on the appointed day. The Evolutionist was advanced in years, with a well-developed but narrow forehead, of the very opposite pattern to that of Plato, the broad-browed. The Agnostic was thin, with an expression of scorn, like that which sits forever on the face of Voltaire. The New-Light Moralist was stout and burly, and looked as if he wished to enjoy life. My mother provided a well-loaded table, and I got glimpses of her, with her snow-white apron, guiding—or, in fact, serving—the somewhat awkward Irish servant. Our Evolutionist praised the beef, and remarked that it could not have been so excellent unless it had been developed; upon which I simply remarked that the development of the breed of cattle, so far from being fortuitous, had had a good deal of skill bestowed on it. The Agnostic relished somewhat the flowers and fruit, and I said that I was glad he found a reality. There was wine on the side-table (my mother would not allow it on the dining-table), and the Moralist, as he drank it, denounced the bigoted temperance men who were depriving people of lawful enjoyments. I hinted that the young men down there in the college did need to be guarded against the terrible temptations, either after the method of Mr. Gough or Dr. Crosby. The conversation gradually slid into farming operations and the topics engrossing the adjoining university.

After the dinner, we retired to a pleasant, rocky height, whence we had a distant glimpse of the ocean over which the ancestors of my mother sailed, and of the college buildings, from which, though a good many miles off, we almost felt as if we heard the hum of the recitations. It was agreed, out of courtesy, that, as each of the three writers had enjoyed an opportunity of expressing his views in full, I should answer them each in turn. Two students, who had come out on their Saturday excursion, joined us. One of them, a scientific, sat with a leer on his eye, wondering at our foolish discussion, and evidently rejoicing that he had a mastodon and a whole host of fossils to go back to. The other, a big-headed fellow, with shaggy brows, listened with intense eagerness, industriously took notes, carried them down with him to his college, and showed them to his professor of

philosophy and a dozen plodding students, who read them with eyes as wide and as wise as those of owls. The issue of the whole is this article.

FIRST ROUND.—THE AGNOSTIC AND THE YANKEE FARMER.

As I saw that, in order to any work being done, it was necessary to have some posts fixed to which to tie our ropes, I began with the Agnostic.

FARMER.—I am very anxious to know what Agnosticism is. The word has come into use since I left school. I suppose it is much the same as used to be called Nescience, which, inconsistently enough, professes to know that we can know nothing, and Nihilism, which proclaims that there is nothing to be known, which implies that Nihilism is nothing, though that of Russia knows how to kill kings. These systems always seemed to me to be suicidal, that is, self-destructive—represented by the serpent which swallowed itself, not even leaving its tail behind.

AGNOSTIC.—There have been a great many able Agnostics from an early date. Gorgias, the sophist philosopher, maintained that he could demonstrate that nothing exists, that if it exists it is unknowable, and even if knowable is not communicable. All the Greek sophists were virtually Agnostics, as they held that man cannot discover independent truth. I do not claim for the fraternity the absolute skeptics such as Sextus Empiricus, who refused to run out of the way of carriages coming upon him. These men made a great mistake in denying anything; they should have contented themselves with refusing to affirm. We claim Hume, who allowed the existence of only impressions and ideas, without a thing to impress or a thing impressed, and Kant, who admits phenomena in the sense of appearances, with, it may be, things behind which can never be known, and Sir W. Hamilton, who elaborated a theory to the effect that "the knowledge of nothing is the principle or the consummation of all true philosophy." But our living masters are Spencer and Huxley.

FAR.—Then your Agnostics are ignorant men, seeing that they know nothing.

AG.—The very opposite. The sophists were very intelligent men, teaching the highest class youths of Greece, in the days of

Pericles. Since the defenses of Lewes and Grote appeared, the sophists are placed above Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who were all pretenders to truth which they did not possess. Kant and Hamilton were profound scholars. Huxley, it will be admitted, knows a good bit of biology, and as to Herbert Spencer, he is filled with universal knowledge.

FAR.—My poor brain is becoming sadly puzzled. These men are evidently very learned, and I am prepared to admire them excessively. I am inclined to say of them what an Irish servant said of his master, who got a fine government office: "My master has got a grand situation; he has nothing to do, and he does it well."

AG.—That is a caricature of our meaning.

FAR.—What, then, do you mean when you say, "We know nothing"?

AG.—We certainly do not know things. But, as Hume allows, we have impressions, which, when reproduced, become ideas. More philosophically, we have phenomena, appearances, as Kant assumed and Hamilton and Spencer allow. But what reality, what thing is, or things are in these, or beneath these, or above them, no one can tell.

FAR.—In my ignorance and stupidity I always looked on appearances as appearances of something—as, in fact, things appearing. Even that cloud consists of drops of moisture which, in that rainbow, are tinged by beams of the sun.

AG.—They exist as appearances. What they have, or whether they have anything besides, we, in our modesty, neither affirm nor deny, for we are not skeptics.

FAR.—But if the words you use have any meaning, they must have appeared to some one, to you or me, whose existence is thereby implied.

AG.—You are going too fast. They are appearances to us, who are also appearances, with what reality we know not.

FAR.—Then we have a vast volume of appearances. I am reminded of what I read in my school-days, of the exclamation of Anacharsis, the Thracian traveler, as he listened to Greek dialectics, "*Væ quantum nihili!*"

AG.—All that Spencer knows—in fact, the whole universe, so far as we can know it—consists of appearances. Science, even that of Newton, is nothing but the classification or arrangement of appearances.

FAR.—But things are arranged according to their qualities, are classified according to their type and structure. These, therefore, must be known.

AG.—Yes, known as appearances.

FAR.—If we know them as appearances, they cannot be absolutely unknown. I am become intently bent on finding out (I suppose I dare not say *knowing*) what we do know, and what we do not know, about these appearances. Lately I was standing by my plow in the field when the horses plunged, and the plow-share was knocked into my leg, which has scarcely yet recovered. What known reality had I there? I suppose I had pain.

AG.—This may be allowed; it was an impression. It was an appearance, though what the pain was we cannot tell.

FAR.—It is useful to have one reality conceded. But I had some other appearances: a couple of plunging horses, a limb torn and bleeding, the wound continuing for weeks, remedies applied, and a healing process. Somehow I believe that these existed just as the pain did, and that the pain was felt by me as a conscious being taking pains to be relieved from it. I believe in the painful measures taken by the surgeon, and the very surgeon himself; in the soothing imparted by my mother, and in my mother as thus soothing me, I feel that I had much the same evidence of all of these. I may allow you to call them phenomena, but then they are of things appearing. It is utter nonsense to give an abstraction a separate position from the thing appearing.

AG.—But do you really go so far as to maintain that all appearances are realities? That this white appearance is a ghost risen from the grave? That this sound heard at midnight was the attack of a burglar? That every unexplained event is a miracle?

FAR.—I crave no such application of my maxim. I do hold that every appearance implies a thing appearing. But we may have to make some inquiries, and exercise judgment in order to determine what the thing appearing is. An appearance literally is an affection of the eye, and this is a reality. There may be need of inquiry, and there may be doubts as to what caused the affection of the eye. I remember of my seeing a white figure in a grove near my father's house, and of my running into the house and declaring that I had seen a ghost. My father took me by the hand, and we went out to the place, to find that the object was a white sheet thrown out on a tree and being moved by the wind.

A tree reflected in a smooth pool is a reality ; it is light reflected from water, though it is not a tree growing with its crown downward. If there be a real appearance, there must be a thing appearing, but we may have to make investigation before we can settle what the thing is—in fact, may never be able to find what it is. In particular, the apparent deceptions of the senses are not real deceptions. In looking across an arm of the sea, I see a rock on the other side which I believe to be a mile off ; but in sailing toward it I find it three miles away. This is merely a wrong inference, founded on the rule, correct enough in ordinary cases, but not applying here. In our common books of science, these mistakes are carefully pointed out, and the veracity of the senses guarded by its being shown that the supposed deceptions of the senses are merely wrong inferences made in the rapidity of thinking.

AG.—But every educated man knows that it has been established that heredity determines men's dispositions, judgments, and opinions. A mountain range divides a people of one character and religion from those of another, and this because the two peoples are of a different ancestry. Every child is the product, not just of his immediate father and mother, but of his progenitors through indefinite ages. People wonder that this infant, just born, has a pug nose, which neither parent has. But older people can tell you that there was a grandmother who had precisely such a nose. So there are characters which seem to separate from their whole kindred ; but if we knew all the ancestry, we should find that we have only a mixture, often incongruous, but sometimes consistent, of the peculiarities of forefathers and foremothers. Judgments thus caused by fate or fortuity are worthless, and we are not sure that there is truth in any of them. In our highest intellectual exercises, we have only appearances which, in other circumstances and with other heredities, might appear very different.

FAR.—We farmers are inclined to attribute much to heredity. We like to have a good breed of horses and cattle ; but I prize the mettle of my horses feeding there as a positive and real thing, even though it may have come from their stock. Whatever my ancestors may have been, I have some gifts which I claim as my own, and which I exercise. I have a perception of things, and a power of judging them and reasoning about them. I perceive the horses down there, and know pretty well which is



a good one. I may have got my power of discernment from my Yankee mother; but it is mine now, and I find I can trust in it. I know things and the relations of things. I inquire into the past and the distant, and can, so far, anticipate the future. If this power has come from heredity, it is a wisely regulated heredity,—quite as much so as that of my horse there, the breed of which has been carefully attended to. I will allow no man to deprive me of this power of judging. I denounce Agnosticism as not only false, but injurious, when it denies me a power of independent thought, and makes me a mere product of circumstances—an advanced catarrhine monkey, which somehow got the power of speech. He who regards himself, and allows himself to be regarded, as a beast, will sink toward the beastly state. I prefer dwelling rather on my heavenly origin, and hope thereby to be aided in attaining a heavenly character.

AG.—Is it possible that a man of sense like you can really credit these fables about an unseen world, which, if it exist, cannot become known to us?

FAR.—I now clearly discover what is the kind of truth to which you Agnostics are so opposed. You believe practically in meat and money as at least attractive appearances. It is not of much moment whether you believe in them theoretically or no, as by hereditary instinct you will eat and drink and seek honors and pleasures in life, whether you do or do not acknowledge them to be realities. But when you set aside moral and spiritual realities, the existence of God, the authority of a divine law, the immortality of the soul, and a judgment-day, there is no natural inclination making us practically allow these truths to restrain and constrain, to guide and elevate.

[At this stage my mother sent us out some fine strawberries, whereon]

AG.—These must have come from the South, as no fruit is yet ripe in this region of ours.

FAR.—Good reasoning upon realities known.

As the strawberries appeared and the guests rose to receive them, the burly New-Light Moralist easily turned the ghostly Agnostic out of the way as if he were as great a nonentity as he affected to be, and proceeded:

SECOND ROUND.—THE NEW-LIGHT MORALIST AND THE YANKEE FARMER.

MORALIST.—We have had enough of this nonsense. I am satisfied that there are realities, and I am anxious to have as many of the good things of this world as I can. I believe not only in the reality of the pleasure I have got from the strawberries, but in the excellence of the strawberries, and in the validity of the inference that they must have come from a warmer climate. I acknowledge the force of your arguments against my friend, who says we can know nothing. But you can advance no such arguments against me.

FARMER.—You should not be so sure of this. You admit that we have perceptions of the senses external, and I may add internal—that is, self-consciousness. It is possible that we may have equally trustworthy perceptions of higher realities. You put trust in your intellectual perceptions. We have also moral perceptions.

MOR.—What do you mean by intellectual perceptions?

FAR.—The perception of the strawberries, and of the validity of the inference that they grew in a warmer climate than this, and all like perception of objects and logical conclusions drawn from them, such as the existence of your friends and their characters.

MOR.—It is quite in my way to admit all this. It is the result of experience.

FAR.—But an experience gathered by the intellect, in which, therefore, you trust.

MOR.—I do not see that you will gain much by my admitting this.

FAR.—It implies that we can distinguish between truth and error. You will admit that the judge and jury in the court in which you plead can in certain cases tell whether the prisoner is or is not guilty. It is surely conceivable that we should also have moral perceptions to distinguish between good and evil. You believe that the jury did right in finding that servant of yours guilty who stole the hundred dollars. But are you not also sure that what she did was bad? Are you not as sure of this as of the fact that she did the deed and that the judge condemned her?

MOR.—I see you adhere to the intuitive theory of morals. You do not seem to call in the Will of God and Scripture, which I am glad of.

FAR.—It has been shown that virtue is good, not because God wills it, but that He wills it because it is good, such being His holy nature. I am not a college-bred man, and I do not know, nor care, what they call my view. I do not know that I have any theory. But I have a fact of consciousness that both you and I disapprove of certain deeds, and approve of others. In this way, I rise to a law which I find to be the law of God. The two supply a very deep foundation for morality. To which theory do you adhere?

MOR.—Certainly not to the Will-of-God theory, nor the intuitive theory. I have a partiality for the utilitarian, or rather the hedonist theory, that we should seek pleasure for ourselves and for others. I believe in both what we now call egoism and altruism.

FAR.—But you acknowledge that you are not altogether satisfied with utilitarianism. Can utilitarianism show you why you should seek pleasure not only for yourself, but for others? Natural, that is, inherited, instincts will lead you to seek pleasure for yourself; but why should you labor and suffer for strangers?

MOR.—To promote the interests of others is often the best means of promoting my own.

FAR.—If this is all the length your altruism carries you, it is, after all, only a systematic egoism—that is, selfishness. There are cases constantly occurring in which men do not see very clearly how doing good to others will do good to themselves; to stand up, for instance, for a maligned man, when the community upon whose favorable opinion our professional success depends is set against him. When such a creed prevails, we shall have few of those noble deeds of courage and self-sacrifice of which our world is so proud. You see at once that hedonism has no obligation to lay on you to promote another man's pleasure; it cannot show that you *ought* to do this. In short, it fails to provide a motive for promoting its own end, that of promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

MOR.—I confess I have some difficulty in determining what the greatest number is, and what is their greatest happiness. I have no desire to see slavery restored in this country, but I cannot settle it in my mind whether the colored people have more pleasure in their present than in their former state. But the utilitarians lay down certain regulating principles as to the beneficial tendencies of acts.

FAR.—It is all but impossible to calculate the precise consequences of certain acts, and there is a great risk of miscalculating under the influence of prejudice. As to the general rules laid down by utilitarians, it is often difficult to apply them—to say when they apply, or which of them does apply, in a given case. But the grand difficulty of the theory lies in the circumstance that it holds out no motive to constrain men to attend, in critical emergencies and when under temptations, to the principles of morals. You do not seem to attach much value to Herbert Spencer's modification of the utilitarian theory.

MOR.—You misunderstand me. In the end his morality may rule the world. Heredity will then make all men moral. Pain will cease. Men will not then need a moral law. They will be virtuous “as a matter of course,” without its being necessary that they should be swayed by love. But development is not yet sufficiently advanced to accomplish this. We who live in the period of “struggle” often do not know what to do.

FAR.—I see no evidence that development is fitted to remove either pain or sin from our world. Certainly they both exist at present, and morality should teach us how to act in a state of things in which they abound. But Mr. Spencer has introduced what he calls a rational utilitarianism, which “deduces from the laws of life and the conditions of existence what kinds of action necessarily tend to produce happiness, and what kinds to produce unhappiness. Having done this, its deductions are to be recognized as laws of conduct, and are to be conformed to, irrespective of a direct estimation of happiness or misery.” The old objection applies to this, that it contains no motive to constrain attention to deductions. What does he mean by the “laws of life”? I am afraid some would not understand them, and many would not feel any obligation to attend to them.

MOR.—He must mean the great laws of development and heredity, the laws derived from the gathered and inherited experience of ancestors, brute and human.

FAR.—But that experience is not uniform. Some of our ancestors, among the lower animals and men, have been cruel; some are deceitful—do, in fact, live by guile; others are sensual. There is the fierceness of the tiger, the cunning of the fox, and the grossness of the pig. These qualities, it may be supposed, are going down in the descent. Are we to follow these, because they come from our fathers? Or are we to resist and reject

them—or, at least, some of them? If so, it must be from some law separate from and distinct from heredity, above heredity, and to which heredity should yield.

MOR.—I notice you are always coming back to an intuitive perception of good and evil—that is, conscience. You know that it has been shown that conscience is the product of heredity, and in that respect is like the other animal propensities, and carries with it no peculiar weight. Darwin has shown that it appears in the lower animals. You may see evidence of it in the look and attitude of the dog, when he has done a deed fitted to please his master, and in his running off, with his tail between his legs, when he has offended. It can carry with it no authority.

FAR.—It may carry with it as much authority as the intelligence which you believe to be also the consolidation of hereditary experience. Your understanding may have been developed, but you are sure it speaks true when it declares that all the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, that you were once at college, that you are now a lawyer, and that the judge decided the case against your servant. May not your moral nature be equally right in declaring that the deed of the servant was wrong and the sentence of the judge just, and that you are entitled to demand that your clients pay their fees?

MOR.—I, too, believe this; but this not because of that fallible conscience. I decide thus because I see what evil would arise from not punishing my servant, and from allowing those for whom I have labored to pay my fees, or not, as they please.

FAR.—This is falling back on utilitarianism, the weakness of which you have exposed. Your account of the nature of conscience in your article is very graphic; but you are evidently laboring under a misapprehension as to its function. You suppose that the conscience is the moral law itself, and is to be regarded as infallible; but this is a mistake. Let me explain what I mean by an illustration: My mother has an old clock on the wall, which is now usually silent, but which she sets agoing occasionally, when it sometimes goes too quick and sometimes too slow, and often stops. She believes (I do not) that it came over in the Mayflower. Now, we do not regard this clock, or any other clock, as regulating time, or as settling the length of the day. These are determined for us by the sun. But there are two things that the clock does: it exhibits hours and days, and, when it is in a sound state, it makes them known to us. Pre-

cisely analogous is the function of the conscience. It does not constitute the good or make the law. Its perceptions do not render an action, considered in itself, to be either virtuous or vicious. What it does is to reveal the quality to us. It is not my eye which makes the apple-tree before us; it simply makes it known to us. Just as little do the decisions of the conscience constitute the goodness of an action. The tree exists, and truth exists, and moral good exists, whether the conscience or the intellect perceives them or no. The moral and intellectual powers are merely the organs through which the good and the true are disclosed. And as the eye may be diseased, so may the conscience, and the intellect, too, become perverted. But the eye implies an object to be seen, and the intellect implies that there is truth; so the conscience implies that there is moral good, which shines up there in the heavens, even when there is (as now) a cloud concealing it. There are standards of truth, as in mathematics, even when the boy makes mistakes in his demonstrations. So there is a moral standard even when men do not attend to it. That standard is not the conscience, but the moral law, which is the law of love—that is, law and love; the law requiring and regulating love. The conscience may vacillate, and even err; but the moral law is immutable and eternal.

MOR.—But you make that law too pure and lofty—as high and unapproachable as the sun. It frightens the young, and is offensive to all because it is so stiff and rigid. I do not propose to do away with law, but it should accommodate itself to our nature and to circumstances, and admit exceptions.

FAR.—A military officer cannot exact obedience beyond his own province—cannot, for instance, demand a special religious belief from his soldiers; but in his own domain he cannot allow exceptions to his orders. The magistrate cannot stretch his penalties beyond his own field of property and life; but in his own jurisdiction he cannot allow people to keep one law and break another; to steal, provided he does not murder; to raise a drunken disturbance on the streets, and be guilty of seduction, provided he be honest. If God's law be holy, just, and good, He must require perfect obedience. What God requires is love under law, and He demands attention to its requirements.

MOR.—But why place the ideal so high?

FAR.—It is of vast moment to have a model before every man, and before society, to keep them from falling and to lift them up

when fallen. Your principles would produce a state of society like that in the time of the Roman Emperors Augustus and Tiberius, like that of Louis XV. in France, and like that of Charles II. in England, from which all men, perceiving the evils, turned away with such a terrible revulsion. You object specially to the Sabbath?

MOR.—Certainly, because so gloomy.

FAR.—I have always looked on the Sabbath as one of the most beneficent of our institutions. It is so to me, my household, and my horses, obliged to toil all the week. I have observed, too, in my occasional travels, that in France, in Germany, and in certain parts of the West in our own country, the people, though well enough educated in the elementary schools, have less intelligence because they have no quiet Sabbath on which to think and keep up their reading.

MOR.—But we might have all this without making the day so awfully sacred.

FAR.—The difficulty would be, without a divine sanction, to make people combine as to the time, and to impose and obey the necessary restrictions. The selfish master would insist on labor from his dependents in certain circumstances—the merchant, for instance, when he had pressing lucrative orders. The pleasure-loving would insist on amusements, requiring labors, which, so far from being amusements, imply severe toil from vast multitudes. You may say law should secure the restrictions; but laws, under popular governments, can only be passed where there is a popular sentiment in their favor, and such laws would not be passed in a state of society such as I have pointed to. Besides, even though law might enjoin a day of rest, it could not make men engage in elevating exercises—in short, to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Our forefathers may on some points have been too stern; but their descendants, with their railway traveling, their reading of novels and secular papers, and their theater-going, may be rushing to the opposite and worse extreme. I know a promising young man, from this neighborhood, who went into a newspaper office where he had to work the whole Sabbath; he struggled for a time, and then lost all sense of everything spiritual. The Sabbath (like every precept of the law) was made for man by the God who made him, and knows what he needs, and has set apart this day to give him rest and make him good.

The Evolutionist here interposed. As he had been at one time my preceptor, as his head was all silvered over where it was not bald, and as his manner of late had become more subdued and less dogmatic, I treated him with more respect than I did the younger men.

THIRD ROUND.—EVOLUTIONIST AND YANKEE FARMER.

EVOLUTIONIST.—I wish you all to understand that I disapprove of these attempts to undermine morality. I believe them to be injurious to the best interests of the race.

FARMER.—It may be as well for you to know whither Agnosticism is tending, and the consequences which some are drawing from Evolution.

EV.—I certainly wish to retain the morality, but to separate it from religion, which I also wish to retain, but in a higher form.

FAR.—But you must be aware that those who have undermined the religion have, in the very act, shaken the morality. You will have to consider whether the principles of an evolution without a religion, without a God, and without a fixed moral law will not lead, logically and practically, to the low and loose morality which our friend has been recommending, and which you are condemning. These discussions as to religion and morality will require those who are not to abandon both to build up from the very foundation, when they may find that the same deep principles which bear up morality are guaranteeing the fundamental truths of religion. You know that the great body of Evolutionists and all Agnostics regard conscience as developed, and the product of circumstances, and therefore having no absolute claim on obedience. What foundation have you left for morality? I am afraid that, like our Moralist here, you will have to advertise for a new ethics, as well as a new religion.

EV.—I have always held that we should all promote the general welfare. I admit the difficulty of the great body of mankind being able or willing to find what that welfare is or requires. But all men have kind social instincts and a hereditary conscience, and our aim should be to create such a public sentiment as to incline men to what is good.

FAR.—But, in the case of many, all these may be counteracted and thwarted by selfishness, by lusts and passions, which need a positive law to lay a restraint on them. I fear that your philoso-



phy tends to weaken these sentiments—which are, after all, mere aids to virtue—as showing that they have no foundation; and you will find it difficult to create, or even keep up, a public feeling ready to stand by a high and severe morality. What think you of those renowned writers, male and female, more than once referred to in these articles, who lived as husband or wife with those to whom they were not married?

EV.—I regret their conduct. I believe in marriage and monogamy. Have you had no such illicit intercourse among professing Christians, who managed to keep their acts concealed?

FAR.—Yes; but we have a moral law which condemns them, and which has created a public sentiment which also condemns them. Remove the law, and the sentiment will evaporate and disappear, and the practice will become general—like the keeping of mistresses by kings two hundred years ago—because there is nothing to restrain it. Such conduct on the part of professing Christians is censured severely, and no one is tempted to copy it. But many feel as if your evolutionary ethics utters no such condemnation, and many may be led to imitate the persons to whom we have referred, because of their genius. It is surely very unwise to separate religion and morality. The moral law in the heart seems to point to a law-giver, and religion gives a motive power to humanity. The great German metaphysician, Kant, showed that the moral reason, whose law he described as the categorical imperative, implied responsibility, a judgment-day, and God as judge; and these are the great truths of natural religion.

EV.—I suppose you give up the argument from design.

FAR.—I do not. As our moral nature demands a law-giver, so our rational nature demands that there be a designer, the cause of the adaptation or design we see everywhere.

EV.—Do not understand that I am opposed to religion. I do not wish to deprive you, my young friend, of your faith. I should not like my lovely adopted daughter to give up her prayers and attendance at public worship. But I confess I am not satisfied with any existing religion.

FAR.—I believe the answers to your advertisement for a new religion have convinced you that there is no hope of your getting a new religion capable of standing a moment's scrutiny.

EV.—I was sincere in my advertisement. I did wish to have a satisfactory religion. I have usually attended the Unitarian

Church, because there was nothing to offend me, while there was nothing to meet my felt wants. It still professes to cling to Scripture, with which it is evidently not consistent. As I cannot live in a vacuum, I am becoming wearied of it. There is evidence that man is everywhere predisposed toward religion.

FAR.—The evolutionists explain this by heredity. I explain it by the felt needs of man and his rational nature, handed down, it may be, from ancestors. You proceed upon the fact that man has a capacity of judging and deciding; and, acting on it, you condemn the heathen superstitions. On like grounds I argue that man has a moral and spiritual, or rather that these are part of his essential, nature.

EV.—But what am I to believe? I am not satisfied with your Scriptures. There are some things in the earlier books which, as Mr. Mill says, are barbarous—such as the cruel wars and the gross immoralities practiced by persons who are recommended to us as exemplars. I cannot believe in their inspiration.

FAR.—Better leave the question of plenary inspiration aside till we ascertain whether there is not something superhuman in them. When we have determined this, on good evidence, we may discover some means of accounting for what is evidently human being allowed to remain. The Scriptures often narrate events and picture characters in dark enough colors. But they show us a clear advance, and they give us enough to lift us above the rudeness and vice prevalent in the barbarous ages. Their precepts, sanctioned by God, such as the decalogue, the moral maxims of the prophets, the discourses of Christ, and the epistles of Paul, Peter, and John, have been the main means of promoting thought, science, and civilization in modern Europe and in America.

EV.—There are doctrines which I cannot swallow. I do not refer to such high dogmas as Predestination and the Trinity, to which so many of my Unitarian friends object. For the great body of philosophers, including Mr. Mill, have held a doctrine of necessity, a more forbidding doctrine than fore-ordination, which implies something of will in man, and a wise God who governs. If there be a God, which I do not deny, though I am in perplexity on the whole subject, His nature must be so high and mysterious that I can conceive there should be in it a Trinity, or threefold distinction, as well as an essential unity. But the doctrine of a blood-atonement I cannot stand; it seems to me so unworthy of God.

FAR.—Many profound thinkers have felt this to be the grand reconciling doctrine of God's government in a world in which God, represented by His law, is holy, and man is an acknowledged breaker of that law, in which there are both good and evil, both optimism and pessimism. No one knows better than the evolutionist that the world has been a scene of contest from the beginning—first a struggle for existence in the animal ages, and now a contest between the evil and the good. In the atonement, God is just and yet the justifier of the ungodly, while the heart of the sinner is won by the manifestation of love.

EV.—There is much in Christianity that commends itself to me. In particular, the character of Jesus is so unique; so perfect in purity, in heavenliness, in love, in tenderness and sympathy, that I am obliged to acknowledge that I cannot understand how a Jew, a Galilean, a Nazarene could have conceived, much less fashioned, such a character.

FAR.—If you only yield to the attractive power of Christ, all will come right with you: you will have a body of consistent and comforting truth to establish you, and a motive to live and labor, to be good and to do good.

By this time the light was failing, and we passed into the house, where we found the evening meal prepared for us. My mother asked me to say grace, and as I did so, the Agnostic gazed into the air, looking on the grace and the air as equally phenomenal; the Moralist, being hungry, fixed his eyes on the food; and the Evolutionist bowed his head reverently and was pained because he could not say amen. Shortly after we parted, each one following his own thoughts, to bear him I know not whither. For myself, I was humbled because I had not done justice to the cause which I tried to sustain, but sure that I was in a more satisfactory state of mind than those abler men who were seeking for truth without finding it.

A YANKEE FARMER.